

That some sense and much common sense has been talked about gambling, but I see the Governor has taken back the remark he made as to the gambling. That a glance through the annual report of the Chamber of Commerce would show that the Chamber of Commerce is not a body of men who would legislate on gambling revenue.

That Mr. Deane and Mr. Byrne are the only members of Council left who have knowledge of the effort made by Governor Macdonald to regulate gambling.

That Mr. Deane is not a man who is paying that the revenue was the gambling block, for it was the thing they could not block at home; but what the Chamber of Commerce objected to was the spread of dishonesty and the spread of corruption, and the spread of the gambling system.

That this protest of the Chamber of Commerce was made after the licensing system had had a fair trial.

That the registration of respectable Chinese might be a benefit, if by so doing you could more easily put a mark upon the disreputable gambling houses.

That Dr. Ho Kiu, as the Governor said, is well able to see in light on the club question, and I do not see the respectability which would be a remedy for the evil which will be done if it does not cure it. That it should be made plain, when talking of corruption in the Police Force in these days, that the look and information are meant.

That I would not care to make the experience of the Scotch people of our Scotch guards, who have for years commanded the respect of residents, and of all people on earth there are no greater haters of bribery than the Scotch.

That I question if London itself can produce a body of men with more respect than our Local European Police.

That Inspector Swanson, I am told, did a poor man, and it is well known the terror his name inspired among the criminal class.

That the community of Hongkong ought not to be doubly thankful that the disease, small-pox, has been confined to this island a wide berth this season.

That the discovery made the other day, that no lymph could be procured, is a marvellous commentary upon the state of affairs in the Sanitary Board of the Government.

That I hear the Government ceased to indent for lymph, that the source of supply in Japan has been cut off, and that no steps have yet been taken to secure a supply elsewhere.

That there may be an explanation for all this, but the Magistrate cannot with reason or justice find a man for failing to have his child vaccinated if there is no lymph in the Colony.

That as Providence takes special care of children, and that the Magistrate has been particularly particular and careful upon Hongkong and her officials.

That I hear some of the brokers are feeling sore at the notice in the *Standard*.

That they say the coolies with their bundles obstruct the side-walks of Queen's Road, and that they are very much to be pitied, and that no one interferes with the coolies.

That the authorities, to be impartial, should run them all in to the Wai-man.

BROWNIE.

A CAPTAIN FINED FOR OVERLOADING HIS STEAMER.

Before Mr. Wise, at the Police Court today, Joseph Hogg, master of the steamer *Nanning*, was charged at the instance of Mr. E. J. Hughes, boarding officer, with having on 21st Feb. unlawfully allowed the said steamer to be so loaded as to submerge the centre of the load-line disc, contrary to the Merchant Shipping Act, 1876, section 23.

E. J. Hughes, the complainant, said: From information I received I went to the *Nanning* on Feb. 21st, and along with Police Sergeant Markins and the chief officer of the steamer I measured and found the disc on the starboard side submerged when the water was at the level of the disc.

The chief officer saw me make the measurements. I informed the Harbour Master on the same day, and at 5.30 p.m. he went off with me to the ship. The ship was ordered to clear that day.

To the defendant I measured the ship's side with your chief officer from the water's edge to the disc. There was a little ripple, but I could tell how much the disc was submerged. I told the chief officer that the ship was ordered.

To the Court—If Lloyd's mark is down to the water's edge it is usual for the disc to be submerged. The master is justified in doing so.

William Charles Holland Hastings said: I am Acting Harbour Master. At 8.30 p.m. on the 21st Feb. I went along with the *Nanning*. She was drawing 16 feet at 10 feet forward. The whole of the disc on the starboard side was submerged for six or eight inches. The starboard side was the lee side and the water there was nearly smooth. On the port side there was a considerable wash. The centre of the disc was barely a wash.

The defendant, the defendant, said: The ballast tank was full on the day in question and next day we pumped it out. That raised the ship 17 or 18 inches. We pumped it with the main engine as the donkey engine is very small. I will not dispute that the mark was under water while we were in the harbour, but before we cleared the Lyman Pan it must have risen 17 or 18 inches.

Archibald Laing said: I am chief engineer of the *Nanning*. On the 21st Feb. I was ordered to fill the tank and did so. It is 11 feet to the top of the tank. I pumped the tank at 8.30 a.m. on the 22nd. We left at 8.30 a.m. The tank was empty at 9. It takes an hour and twenty minutes to empty it. We would be about the Nineteen when we commenced to pump. To fill the tank makes a difference of about 100 tons.

This concluded the evidence.

Commander Hastings asked that a penalty should be imposed as a warning, as there seemed to be a general impression that the section of the Act under which the charge was brought did not apply here.

The defendant gave notice of appeal.

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THE HONGKONG FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

A meeting of the Hongkong Fire Insurance Co. was held at noon today at the Office of the General Managers, Messrs Jardine Matheson & Co. Hon. J. K. Keene presided and there were also present: Messrs T. E. Davies, J. S. Moses and F. T. Foster, Members of the Consulting Committee; and Messrs J. F. Ball-Irving, B. Dymally, Ho Kow Tong, Ng Lai Ping, D. McQuillan, A. H. Ching, A. McCulloch, T. Arnold, Ng Awei, J. E. O. da Costa, E. Ebrahian, R. C. Wilcox, N. N. J. Ezra, S. E. Levy and G. T. Vothel, Secretaries.

The Chairman said: Gentlemen, the results of the working of the year 1890, you will have observed from the Report, does not compare favourably with that of the previous year, only enabling us to pay a dividend of £18 per share against £23 for 1889, but I think in these days of keen competition, shareholders should regard the outcome of the account as not at all unsatisfactory. With regard to the 1890 account, our losses have been much larger than usual, and in addition to the payments shown in the Report, further losses amounting to £97,000 have been incurred, but against this there is an approximate amount of £50,000 representing an increase of premium still to be credited. Our principal losses have been in Sydney, Shanghai, Hongkong and Bombay; the Sydney loss in October last was a most disastrous one for Underwriters, and we may consider ourselves fortunate in escaping as lightly as we did; however, taking it all together, the outlook is not quite so satisfactory as could be wished for, and we must hope that the year will run off better than was the case last year. The premium income for 1890, I have already mentioned, shows a very satisfactory increase, more especially in the United Kingdom, where our business is, I am pleased to state, progressing in a manner equal to what the most sanguine could have hoped for. I would, however, like shareholders to bear in mind that owing to the reduction in rates of late years, to earn the same amount of premium as formerly, we have to take almost double the amount of business, and consequently the risk of loss is proportionately greater. We can therefore hardly look for much continuous brilliant return in future as in the past. I need hardly say that the London Agents have had difficulties to contend with of no small moment owing to the strenuous opposition and indeed annals of the local office, but they have done well, and have been overcome successfully, and we have a valuable and growing connection throughout Great Britain. These, gentlemen, are all the remarks that occur to me as being necessary to make, but before disposing the adoption of the Report, I would very much like to be very pleased to reply to any questions that may be addressed to the chair.

There being no question, the Chairman proposed the adoption of the report and accounts.

Mr. Dymally seconded and the motion was carried.

Mr. McQuillan proposed that the appointment of Messrs F. T. Foster and C. J. Holliday to the Consulting Committee be confirmed, and that the retiring members, Hon. C. P. Chester, Messrs J. S. Moses and T. E. Davies, be re-elected.

Mr. McQuillan seconded and the motion was carried.

Mr. Arnold proposed the re-election of Mr. G. S. Coxon and Mr. E. Henderson as auditors.

Mr. Ezra seconded and the motion was carried.

The Chairman intimated that dividend warrants would be ready on Monday.

1868-1891.

GAMBLING IN HONGKONG.

If a resident who left the Colony in 1868 were to take up a Hongkong paper of to-day he might come to the opinion that the Colony had just awakened from a sleep of 23 years, for he would find that we were engaged discussing the same subjects as agitated the Colonial mind when he left. The military contribution and licensed gambling were the great topics of that day as they are to-day.

In the petition which we published yesterday reference was made to a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce in 1868 to consider the effect of the system of licensed gambling.

The meeting was presided over by the Hon. P. Byrne, and his remarks and those of two or three others are worth repeating.

The Chairman, in rising to open the meeting, said that the gentlemen present must have all seen from the Circular which was the object for which they had met together; and before the resolutions (which he understood had been prepared) were put to the meeting, he begged leave to say a few words. He confessed that, when the question of licensing gambling in this Colony was alluded to, he was of opinion that it would not do any harm, while it might be the means of doing some good; but since the day had been in operation, and instances of its evil influence had come under his personal knowledge, he had seen reason to alter his opinion, and he now took to the subject with a different view, and that the Government of this Colony would be abiding its best interests by abolishing it altogether. During the last two or three months he made it a point of asking the opinion of nearly every respectable Chinese with whom he had come in contact, and they one and all denounced the system as one which was creating much mischief to the trade of the Colony; this was the ground on which it came into the province of this Chamber to endeavor to abolish it, and he was glad to find that the same conclusion to which he had arrived. He understood that one member of the Chamber was in possession of information showing that the gambling had diminished very materially the number of persons who were engaged in the trade in the habit of buying 20 or up to 50 pieces of shirting and taking them for sale to the various towns and villages in the neighbourhood. These men, reduced by the allurements of the gambling halls, had abandoned their former occupation, and taken to the sedentary and idle life of the gambling houses, and they were now laborious occupation of gambling. He would say that this view of the case had only been put before him by one or two of his Chinese friends. The great evil which he would say was the one of which they had already obtained and could obtain more sample proofs was the number of robberies from employers by shrewd and others engaged in collecting money, and he felt con-

ident that many of these robberies would not have been committed, were these people gambling-houses not lavishly open. On this ground alone, viz., the danger to the honest men of persons in trade who were exposed, he thought it was the duty of the Chamber to express a strong opinion against the system. He would not enter upon the bad moral effects of the system, as the views on that head had already been expressed by the Lord Bishop of Victoria, and he believed the whole clergy in the Colony of all denominations, being entirely opposed to the gambling license. It had been said that it was utterly impossible to stop gambling altogether, and the same might be said of any other crime or evil practice; but that could certainly never form any argument for doing away with the police altogether. A good deal had been said of late about the great evil of the Police, and if such really were the case, he considered that, with the assistance which the better class of the Chinese community would gladly give, gambling could be almost entirely prevented; in any case, it could be reduced to such a small compass that it could only be carried on in a corner of the way which would only be resorted to by the very dregs of the population. He would leave the matter in the hands of the meeting, and the members present would give such expressions of opinion and pass such resolutions they might think fit.

Mr. J. Taylor said he had made inquiries of various merchants, shopkeepers and others, and the one conclusion to which he had come was that licensed gambling was bad and that its effects were bad. The removal of the ostensible form of gambling, viz., the game of *patience*, by the Police and punishment by the Courts, had naturally only one result, viz., the great increase of gambling; while there was a great number of men whose interest was to encourage gambling by every means in their power. These were the Gambling Houses and the *patience* game, which they were, for it was well known that it was a sort of joint-stock undertaking. While gambling had formerly been practised secretly, a check was laid upon the vice, but now everything was done to encourage it. The Farmer might possibly be a good deal to the Government, but to some extent, but that would be only so far as it might suit his own ends, because he had every reason to encourage public gambling; he had to pay to Government an annual sum of \$200,000, and his income was probably \$500,000 or \$600,000 a year, which represented a very large amount of money (as it was extracted from the poorer classes of the place), and which, employed in legitimate trade, would materially help to dispel the general complaints of idleness in business. As to the direct effects of the system of licensed gambling, he would repeat what he had said before, that he could not now get his staff to send one man to collect money, although that man was of good character; but two collectors had now to be sent, the one to watch the other, else the money would not be brought home with any degree of safety, owing to the attractions of licensed gambling. There were complaints on every side from contractors, merchants and owners of ships. Captains of merchant vessels, who, as to freight, &c., sometimes possessed great powers and large sums of money, were gambling houses and the *patience* game, and it was also with sailors. Altogether, the effects of the system proved that it was prejudicial to the interests of the community; and he would therefore move the following resolution:—That it is the opinion of this Chamber of Commerce that the system of licensed gambling is a great evil, and that it is the duty of the Government to suppress it by every means in their power, and that they should encourage the native population to engage in business, and amongst the native employees of Foreign Firms.

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